

The Dallas Morning News

Friday, December 21, 2001

Fund-raiser Will Help Pro Bono Efforts

Robert Miller

The Campaign for Equal Access to Justice, a joint fund-raising effort of Legal Services of North Texas and the Dallas Bar Association, is seeking contributions to help train and support pro bono attorneys who provide legal services to the poor.

"Proceeds support staff that recruit and administer our pro bono efforts," says Jonathan W. Vickery, president and chief executive officer of Legal Services of North Texas.

"There are 245,497 people who live at or below the federally established poverty levels in Dallas County, according to 1999 estimates," the latest available.

Despite grants and revenue, many of the 10,149 people who asked for help last year had to be turned away.

Pro bono and staff attorneys intervene on behalf of battered women and abused children, handle adoptions, provide assistance to families who are about to lose their homes, help the elderly with wills and health law issues, provide debt counseling, participate in neighborhood legal clinics, and assist the disabled and the terminally ill, he pointed out.

Legal Services "has acted as the 'county hospital' for the low-income community who need civil legal aid but cannot afford private counsel."

For additional information or to contribute, call Legal Services of North Texas at 214-748-1234.